

HORT 2302 & HORT 2306 Summer Work Experience What's it all about?

HORT 2302, 'Horticulture Work Experience', and HORT 2306, 'Work Experience Report' are required by all students for graduation in the School of Horticulture Technology Diploma and Bachelor of Horticulture Science Degree programs. Their primary objectives are to demonstrate to future employers that KPU graduates not only have a broad yet in-depth academic grounding in the key subject areas required by all horticulturists, but also practical understanding and experience of their chosen area of industry specialisation. This was a key objective of the original programs, and remains a critical piece of the School of Horticulture credentials that makes them so well respected by industry partners and so valuable for you, the student.

What is required?

You need to find a job. Typically this takes place in the summer between your first and second years, but it can be done anytime. Just remember that you will not be eligible to graduate from your program if you have not completed the Work Experience credits. That's non-negotiable.

How much time do I have to do?

HORT 2302 is completed with documentation (employer's/supervisor's letter or pay stubs with company name) indicating that 455 hours or more of work. That's about 12 weeks of full-time (40 hours) employment. In horticulture, it is very easy to put in 40hours per week in the summer, so there should be no problem meeting this requirement in one go. You therefore have time to complete this program requirement and take a couple of weeks' vacation in between semesters two and three.

How do I find a job?

You are responsible for finding the work. It is not a 'placement'. Having said that, faculty will be announcing lots of opportunities during the spring semester as they hear about them from employers, and can give you some suggestions if you are stuck. Also, there are many job posting on the www.kpu.ca/hort website, so visit this frequently.

When should I do this?

Start in January by getting your résumé and a 'general' cover letter organized. Get advice from the Student Resource Centre (Rm 2070, Langley, or on all other campuses). Begin looking for work in February. This might seem early, but doing it then allows you to get the job you want, not just 'what's left'.

Do I have to do paid work?

In theory yes. But ultimately, the intent is to make sure that you fulfil the major learning objectives of the course. You may be able to do this in a non-profit or volunteer position. Check this with your faculty member.

School of Horticulture.

Can I use time I did in a job before starting my program?

Yes. If you have confirmation from a previous employer about the number of hours that you worked for them, and that position is deemed suitable for work experience credits by the course instructor, then you should be able to use that as a form of prior learning. Students must first get permission from the course instructor to challenge the course, and then initiate a request for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

How do I know that a particular job is suitable for Work Experience credits?

Once you have a job in mind, go talk to the faculty member overseeing HORT 2302 and HORT 2306 course that year (name is posted on the Fall Semester Timetable). He or she will be able to discuss it with you and decide if it will enable you to meet the required learning outcomes. Some work would be unsuitable to meet the course learning objectives. Examples might include: self-employment (since it cannot be independently evaluated or documented), or general residential gardening.

Can I use work from more than one employer?

Yes. You don't have to get all your hours from a single employer. Sometimes employers may lay off staff before originally planned, often for reasons beyond their control (e.g. 'slow' summer garden centre sales). Or perhaps you want to experience different aspects of horticulture and can find work in different places. Make sure all employers confirm the number of hours worked (pay stubs and signed KPU form), and keep track to make sure you have enough overall. Be careful however. Jumping from job to job may reflect poorly on your résumé in the eyes of future (permanent) employers. They will question the reasons why you moved so much and this may affect your chances of getting your dream job. As a guide, a couple of different summer jobs could be useful, but more than that is probably not wise.

Can I work abroad?

Of course. In fact, this would be great. Previously, students have worked in England, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia. If you want to do this, please make sure you get suitable work permits and/or visas sorted out well in advance of heading overseas.

Do I have to do any 'paperwork'?

For sure. You'll need to do your actual work experience. Take pictures of what you do and where you work. Keep track of the things you do each day, each week. Look at the business and see how it works. Or doesn't. And come back ready to do a class presentation in the fall and prepare a written report for HORT 2306 scheduled in the Fall Semester.

What next – how do I get started?

The faculty member overseeing HORT 2302 and HORT 2306 will provide paperwork ahead of the summer or you will be able to access the documents on-line at www.kpu.ca/hort .

Registration?

You will register for both HORT 2302 and 2306 together in the fall. They are co-requisite courses, so go hand-in-hand.